



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/780,486	02/17/2004	Brian D. Robertson	AMAZON.18C1C1	1537
20995	7590	03/27/2006	EXAMINER	
KNOBBE MARTENS OLSON & BEAR LLP			JEANTY, ROMAIN	
2040 MAIN STREET			ART UNIT	
FOURTEENTH FLOOR			PAPER NUMBER	
IRVINE, CA 92614			3623	

DATE MAILED: 03/27/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.		Applicant(s)	
	10/780,486		ROBERTSON ET AL.	
	Examiner		Art Unit	
	Romain Jeanty		3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 December 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 9 and 22-33 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 10-21 and 34-37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. In view of the Reply Brief filed on 11/21/2005, PROSECUTION IS HEREBY REOPENED. A new ground of rejection is set forth below.

To avoid abandonment of the application, appellant must exercise one of the following two options:

- (a) file a reply under 37 CFR 1.111 (if this Office action is non-final) or a reply under 37 CFR 1.113 (if this Office action is final); or,
- (b) request reinstatement of the appeal.

If reinstatement of the appeal is requested, such request must be accompanied by a supplemental appeal brief, but no new amendments, affidavits (37 CFR 1.130, 1.131 or 1.132) or other evidence are permitted. See 37 CFR 1.193(b)(2).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 1, the phrase "may have" renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear whether the limitations following the phrase are part of the claimed invention. See MPEP § 2173.05(d).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

5. Claims 1, 10-11, 19, and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Siitonen (U.S. Patent No. 6,049,796).

As per claim 1, Siitonen discloses a method for searching a database utilizing a search criteria. In so doing, Siitonen discloses a networked server system that provides a user interface having functionality for users to establish relationships with other users such that each user may have one or more contacts (col. 2, lines 16-29), database that stores relationship data indicating the relationships established between the users via the user interface, wherein the relationship data identifies, for each respective user, which other users are contacts of the respective user (col. 2, line 38-50), a search module that provides functionality for users to search the database for

Art Unit: 3623

contacts of their respective contacts, such that a first user submits a search request to identify other users that are contacts of contacts of the first user (See Figures 4A and 4B; col. 5, line 61 through col. 6 line 4).

As per claim 10, Siitonen further wherein the search module runs on the server system and is accessed by the users via the user interface (col. 4, lines 27-46).

As per claims 11, and 37, Siitonen discloses a method for searching a database utilizing a search criteria. In so doing, Siitonen discloses providing a database that stores, for each user of a plurality of users, information about contacts of the respective user (col. 2, lines 38-50), receiving, from a first user of said plurality of users, a search request to search for contacts of contacts of the first user and in response to the search request, searching the database to identify a set of users who are contacts of contacts of the first user (col. 2, line 38-50, col. 5, line 61 through col. 6 line 4), and notifying the first user of the set of users (col. 10, lines 21-27).

As per claim 19, Siitonen discloses the method of claim 11, wherein notifying the first user of the set of users comprises displaying an indication of how each user in the set is related to the first user (col. 3, lines 1-17).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at

Art Unit: 3623

the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 2, and 34-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over (U.S. Patent No. 6,049,796).

As per claim 2, Siitonen discloses the concept of providing access to client of the system, wherein a database additionally includes personal data records of the users (col. 3, line 11-18). However, Siitonen does not explicitly disclose the relationship data specifies permission levels granted by each respective user for allowing specific contacts of the respective user to view information from the personal data record of the respective user. However, most databases contain permission level for different users for allowing users to view only users' permitted information. Incorporating this feature into Siitonen would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art with the motivation to prevent an unauthorized user from viewing unauthorized information data

As per claim 34-36, Siitonen discloses the concept of searching a database, but Siitonen does not explicitly disclose searching a database comprising joining tables of said database to identify users who are of contacts of a user. However a database comprising a joining tables is well-known in the relational database art. Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the database of Siitonen to include a joining tables so that the user can make a query about, for example, a particular user.

8. Claims 3-7, 12-16, and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Siitonen as applied to claim 1 above in view of Dialog (Special Report: Russel Information Science' Calendar Manager).

As per claims 3-6, 21, Siitonen does not explicitly disclose the features claimed. However, the features claimed are standard practice in personal contact management art. Dialogue discloses the concept of allowing a user to view other users' information and permission level. Note entire page 3 of Dialog. Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate these features into the disclosures of Siitonen with the motivation to prevent unauthorized users from viewing other users' information.

As per claim 7, Siitonen does not disclose wherein the search module provides functionality for the first user to search the database for contacts of contacts of the first user that reside in a common geographic region with the first user. However, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate this feature into the Siitonen's system with the motivation to allow a user to contact a user in a same area.

As per claims 12-15, Siitonen does not expressly disclose the claimed features. Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate these features into the disclosures of Siitonen with the motivation to prevent unauthorized users from viewing other users' information.

As per claim 16, Siitonen further discloses the method of claim 11, wherein searching the database comprises taking residence information of the users into consideration to search for users who both (a) are contacts of contacts of the first user (col. 2, lines 51-67), but Siitonen fails to explicitly disclose users reside in a common geographic region with the first user. However, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate this feature into the Siitonen system with the motivation to allow a user to contact a user in a same area.

Art Unit: 3623

9. Claims 8, 17-18, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Siitonen as applied to claim 1 above in view of Howell et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,276,901).

As per claim 8, 17-18, Siitonen does not explicitly disclose contacts of the first user that are affiliated with a group with which the first user is also affiliated. Howell et al discloses an improved method which permits designated groups of users or a single selected user and his or her designated affinity users (col. 4, lines 8-30). It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to have modified the disclosures of Siitonen to incorporate the teachings of Howell with the motivation to provide an improved method which permits designated groups of users to select users of his or her designated affinity users.

As per claim 20, Siitonen does not explicitly disclose providing to the first user an option to add a user from said set of users to a personal address book of the first user. However, allowing a user an option to add other user to address book is well known in the art. It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the disclosures of Siitonen to include an option to add a user from a set of users to a personal address book with the motivation to allow a user several users to search and retrieve selected groups of users.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

a. Geary (U.S. Patent No. 6,070,160) discloses a method for programming computers to host databases and search engines for rapid storage and retrieval of user information.

b. Brodersen (U.S. Patent No. 6,092,083) discloses a relational database management system supports joining tables in response to a query from a user.

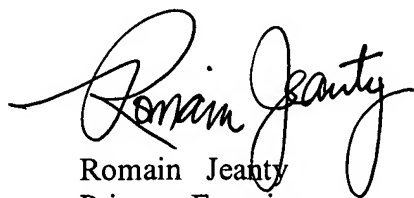
6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Romain Jeanty whose telephone number is (571) 272-6732. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs 7:30AM - 6:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq R. Hafiz can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

RJ

February 6, 2006


Romain Jeanty
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3623